

## Hearing set to discuss feasibility of third bridge

*By Mike Bowie  
Evening Times Editor*

"At some point in time, we had to get it up on the radar screen," said Ray Woodruff, district engineer for the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD). Woodruff was speaking of a public hearing on a feasibility study for a third Mississippi River bridge in this area. "This is not the I-69 bridge that we're talking about, this would be a third bridge possibly somewhere in the south Memphis area," Woodruff said. "There's nothing on paper anywhere to say where it's going, this hearing is part of the process."

The first public hearing is scheduled for April 23 at West Memphis City Hall and a second hearing will be April 24 in Hernando, Miss., at the DeSoto County Administration Building. Both hearings are set from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. and will allow public comment on the project.

Woodruff said the third bridge has been recommended by the West Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is something that is badly needed in this area.

"With all the truck traffic the two bridges carry now, a third bridge is something that is badly needed in that area," he said. "Anything that will take some of the traffic off of those two interstates would be helpful."

The third bridge project is Phase 2 of the Highway 79 Feasibility Study. Highway 79 is a part of Highway 70 and runs south off Highway 70 at Shearerville to Hughes, Marianna and Pine Bluff.

"This is actually a project that would connect Pine Bluff with the interstates," Woodruff said.

Eddie Brawley, engineer for the local MPO, was out of town this morning and not available for comment.

"I would expect that Eddie is really excited about this since this is something that he has been advocating for some time," Woodruff said.

